



Illinois Department of Revenue

For Immediate Release
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MADIGAN, HAMER ANNOUNCE VERMILION ILLEGAL GAMBLING CHARGES

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) Director Brian Hamer today announced charges against four individuals for illegal gambling. The charges stemmed from a raid of two establishments in Vermilion County. The raids and charges occurred yesterday.

The operation focused on owners of the establishments and bartenders who allegedly regularly made illegal cash payouts on video slot machines and video poker machines. The operation was based primarily on an investigation by IDOR Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) activities over a four-month period beginning in August 2004. Madigan's office drew up the arrest warrants and will prosecute the cases. The Illinois Liquor Control Board also participated in the operation at Belgium Banquet Hall.

The two targeted establishments where the raids took place are the Belgium Banquet Hall, 3015 Georgetown Rd., in Westville, and the American War Dads #61 Hall, 3 Southgate, in Tilton. Four individuals were charged with Gambling and Keeping A Gambling Place, each Class A Misdemeanors punishable by up to 364 days in the county jail and a \$2,500 fine. In addition, any conviction for Keeping A Gambling Place could result in a revocation of a facility's liquor license for up to one year at the address and possible permanent prohibition of a liquor license for the bar owner. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General will bring complaints for forfeiture of the gambling machines and any gambling proceeds.

"While these activities may seem harmless to some, making payouts based on video poker games and slot machines is against the law, no matter who is doing it," Madigan said. "Anti-gambling laws apply to all Illinoisans."

"These machines are illegal, and the owners are not paying tax on the significant amount of money that they make from this illegal activity," Hamer said. "The raids, arrests and seizures send a strong message that this activity will not be tolerated."

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The following individuals were charged yesterday:

Tammie Leigh, 38, Westville. Leigh, bartender of Belgium Banquet Hall, was charged with one count of Gambling and one count of Keeping A Gambling Place. Leigh allegedly made payouts to undercover IDOR agents on October 9, 2004.

Harley Newell, 70, Danville. Newell, owner of Belgium Banquet Hall, was charged with two counts of Gambling and one count of Keeping A Gambling Place. Newell allegedly was present at the hall on October 9, 2004, and oversaw all of the hall's operations.

Rose Violet Sterling, 78, Westville. Sterling, manager of American War Dads #61 Hall, was charged with two counts of Gambling and one count of Keeping A Gambling Place. Sterling allegedly made illegal payouts to undercover IDOR agents on November 7, 2004.

James Bann, 64, Tilton. Bann, an officer of American War Dads #61 Hall, was charged with two counts of Gambling and one count of Keeping A Gambling Place. Bann allegedly was present at the facility on November 7, 2004, and oversaw all of the hall's operations.

IDOR agents also seized the following:

- ✓ Nineteen video slot and video poker machines and approximately \$35,000 from the Belgium Banquet Hall.
- ✓ Twenty video slot and video poker machines and approximately \$3,000 from the American War Dads #61 Hall.

The public is reminded that these charges are merely accusations. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.